

# Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

## Newsletter to Members 2011 SUMMER...ISSUE #3/4 30th Anniversary 1980-2010

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



Boyd's Dairy featured a prominent and well-loved cow perched on top of their sign at Main Street & Duff Avenue.

### Ames Historical Society Board:

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The Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at City Hall at 6:45pm. Members welcome!

**Administrator** Alan Spohnheimer  
**Staff** Carolyn Larson, Dennis Wendell  
Margaret Vance  
**Facility Manager** Vacant; seeking volunteer

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

**Headqtrs:** 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010  
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm  
**Mail:** PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010  
**Phone:** 515-232-2148  
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**Website:** [www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org)

The newsletter is published four times a year for A. H. S. members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, Iowa. Open April 1 through October 31.

## Remembering the Cow: Boyd's Dairy 1941- 86

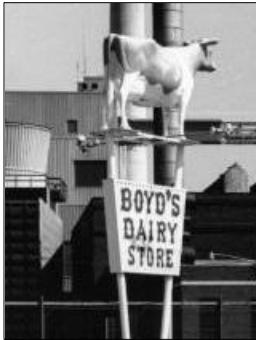
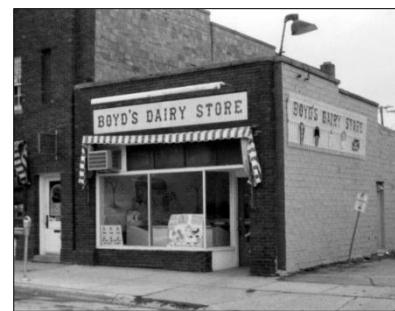
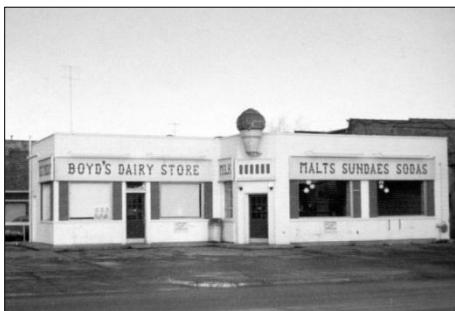
By Mary E. (Meg) Speer, with assistance from Kathy Svec

Remember once upon a time in Ames when you could stop at one of two Boyd's Dairy stores for a shake, a cone or a pint of ice cream to take home for dinner? Though no hint of that popular ice cream store now exists in either campustown or downtown Ames, it is remembered fondly by many current and former residents.

James E. "Jim" and Gene Boyd opened their dairy in 1941 in Boone, bottling milk and cream and making natural 12% butterfat ice cream. It was THE place everyone headed on a hot evening. Both Jim and Gene served in World War II while family members, Lonnie and Glenn, kept the business operating.

In addition to producing milk and its own ice cream mix, Boyd's offered other dairy items, including butter and cottage cheese.

In 1961, Jim bought Gene's share and expanded to Ames in 1967. The downtown store was at 101 Main Street on the northwest corner of Duff and Main Street (below, left). The campustown store was at 132 Hayward, just half a block south of Lincoln Way (below, right).



The Ames store featured an iconic cow perched on top of the corner sign. Jim ordered the plastic creature for the store at the same time he bought a big ice cream cone for the sign over the entry door.

Starting with a 2½ gallon ice cream freezer and one store, the Boyd's eventually owned four stores and a continuous freezer capable of turning out 150 gallons an hour. Ames residents and Iowa State students counted themselves among the lucky!

In any telling of the story about Boyd's Dairy, it's significant to mention the hundreds of high school students who worked in their stores over the many years they were open. Corner one of those former workers and they'll wax nostalgic. It was a magnet as a place for high school kids to hang out and was a popular spot for earning spending money – and enjoying the employment perk of free ice cream.

Boyd's pioneered unusual flavors and the stores regularly offered a selection from about 50 flavors. Jim invented Bubble Gum ice cream – and both adults and kids liked to lick and chew and blow bubbles at the same time. At the time it was introduced, Jim was interviewed by NPR (National Public Radio) about this unusual taste treat. Boyd's once made five gallons of Rhubarb Sherbet "more or less as a joke" but Rhubarb Sherbet hit it big and they produced it every spring. One rhubarb fan would take nine gallons of the sherbet home to

San Francisco every year and invite former Iowans over for a party. For "Crazy Daze" in Boone, Boyd's made dill pickle ice cream!

Giles Fowler, now a retired ISU professor, has fond memories of Boyd's Dairy. As a young boy in 1984, he was pictured in "Lifestyle Records" with the caption, "Giles Fowler gets in his licks at Boyd's Dairy in Boone, where he finds ambrosial ice cream in a ravishing rhubarb sherbet, made the old fashioned way." Among his other favorites were Chocolate Almond, Oreo Crunch and Tin Roof, which Boyd's may have invented. The malts and shakes were legendary.

Carol Robbins and Herbert Wolff wrote a book, *The Very Best Ice Cream and Where To Find It* after roaming



the country seeking the finest examples of this cold treat. They investigated over 600 ice cream makers and parlors from Alaska to Hawaii, and tasted and tried the chilly offerings of 350 of them. For the book, they chose the most mouth-watering, delicious and finest ice cream delights that were available in America. The Philadelphia Inquirer called it "a bible for the ice cream connoisseur." A description of the book said this, "From Apricot to Zabaglione and every flavor in between... From roadside haunts to pushcarts to big and small independent ice cream makers..." Boyd's was included and the dairy's fans in Ames and Boone were so proud! On page 98, it said, "From the heartland of America, Boyd's stocks sentiment as well as invention, with fine tasting results. [Boyd's makes] seriously good ice cream."

"We've never entered [our ice cream] in any competition," said Jim's daughter, Linda. "We think our satisfied customers are the best judges of our product."

Jim passed away in 1982 and Linda, moved back to Boone to run the stores. Boyd's worked hard to compete with milk sold in grocery stores, and also expanded their product line to include cheese trays, stuffed animals, gourmet coffee, cream top milk, and added lunch items - Kokinakis, chili and coney dogs. But milk bottles became a thing of the past when there was no longer any place to purchase them. Boyd's was one of the last dairies to sell milk in glass bottles.



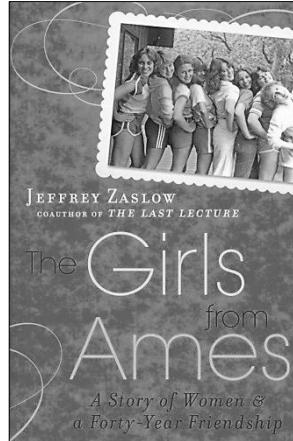
Boyd's closed in 1986, a great business for 45 years. They owned three stores in Boone and two in Ames. Hundreds of people were employed throughout the years and many, many people still share wonderful memories of enjoying ice cream on a hot summer night - or picking up a pint or two of rhubarb or bubble gum ice cream to take home for dinner.

(Footnote: at the store closing auction, Burke Marketing in Nevada purchased the cow from the famous sign.)

We'd be pleased to hear our readers' memories of Boyd's! Send to [mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org).

## Boyd's & The Girls From Ames

Author Jeffrey Zaslow, in his best-selling book, *The Girls from Ames...A Story of a Forty Year Friendship*, included three pages (52-54) on seven of the girls who worked at Boyd's.



Among other tales is an embarrassed telling of the time two of them accidentally forgot to plug the freezer back in after defrosting it. The next morning, ten gallons each of twenty-five flavors were melted goop! Amazingly, the two kept their jobs.

When Jeffrey was researching, he was curious about Boyd's and sought pictures and information about the dairy in the Society's archives. Alas, neither could be found at the time he was looking. When the book was released, the author and all the "girls" were in Ames for a book signing and lecture at Iowa State's Memorial Union and still no Boyd's artifacts had surfaced.

For this article, finally, Linda Boyd Bravard of Boone generously shared her treasures and the history of the family's business, including items on display in her home.



"The Girls" were in Ames in June 2011 for their 30<sup>th</sup> high school class reunion. Here are 6 of the 7 who worked at Boyd's: Diana Speer Sarussi, Jenny Benson Litchman, Karla Derby Blackwood, Cathy Highland, Sally Brown Hamilton, Karen Brady Leininger

## Speaking of The Girls From Ames...

By Meg Speer

In a 2009 newsletter, we mentioned Jeffrey Zaslow's *The Girls from Ames, A Story of Women and a Forty-Year Friendship* that was released that year. The book spent 26 weeks on the New York Times Bestseller List. More than 300,000 copies have been sold in the US and the book has been published in numerous countries overseas.

The Society is pleased to have a copy of *The Girls From Ames* in its collection, signed by all the women and the author. The author and "girls" have participated in discussion groups, book clubs and programs across the country talking about Ames and their friendships. A portion of the royalties from the book funds an Ames High scholarship in memory of Sheila Walsh, one of their circle who died. Lifetime is working on a movie.



This past June, nine of the ten women were in Ames for their thirtieth Ames High School Class Reunion. Marilyn McCormack Johnson, traveling overseas, was missing, but not forgotten.

Zaslow is the author of the best-selling books, *The Last Lecture* and *Highest Duty*, the story of Capt. Chesley B. Sullenberger who landed a plane on the Hudson River. His new book is on Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, Mark Kelly, in Arizona.

Pictured: Back row: Jane Gradwahl Nash, Diana Speer Sarussi, Jenny Benson Litchman, Karen Brady Leininger; Front row: Angela Bendorf Janigen, Sally Brown Hamilton, Cathy Highland, Karla Derby Blackwood

*This ad was in the 1973 Ames High yearbook, the Spirit. The senior girl no doubt fulfilled a long-held fantasy to milk the Boyd's cow!*

BOYD'S  
Perched 20 feet in the air, Senior Kathy Hoff shows that milking the Boyd's Dairy cow is not hard to do.  
Boyd's Dairy Stores  
Main and Duff Campustown

## Farewell & Welcome



Our Assistant Administrator, Sara Vouthilak, departed the Society's staff in July to begin a new phase of her life in California. She said, "Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work at AHS. I have enjoyed being involved since December 2002. It has been a pleasure to get to know those who make up this organization and to work side by side on meaningful projects with so many people of such high caliber." We are grateful to Sara for helping the Society to grow and for being such a tremendous asset in serving members, visitors, community members and all other people we touch.

Curator, Dennis Wendell (above, left), in a formal professorial robe, presented a certificate of appreciation and gift. In trying to think of the right gift, Wendell decided to give her a work of art, because she is an artist. He stated, "I pondered oils, because Sara works in oils. I considered a watercolor, mixed media, prints, and lithographs. I finally decided on an engraving!" He then presented her a framed \$100 bill. Under the bill was the sentence, "In case of emergency, break glass."

We are very pleased to introduce our new Assistant Administrator, Carolyn Larson. She is a May 2010 graduate of University of Iowa with a BA in Art and Art History and Certificates in Grant Writing/Management, and Museum Studies.

She was a volunteer at the University of Iowa Museum of Art and a member of the Campus Museum Collective. Several key internships have broadened her experience, notably at the Ankeny Art Center where she assisted with marketing, at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport where she worked in the education department and at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines where she was responsible for the first cataloguing and inventorying of their fine art and antiques collection.

Carolyn is fluent in many essential computer programs, including *PastPerfect*, the inventory and cataloguing program for small museums. She is working on her Master's in Public Administration at Drake, emphasizing Nonprofit Management. We are very pleased to add Carolyn to our staff! She will be working half-time.

# AHS News: Planning & Working Toward the Society's Future

## Opportunity #1 Presents Itself

When a piece of land adjoining the Society's property in downtown Ames appeared with a "For Sale" sign on it, we knew we had to act. In June, the Society placed a successful offer on a parking lot located at 120 Fifth Street. This property will provide needed space for a variety of future needs - parking as well as a possible building expansion.

Due to the generosity and support of our members and donors, we received a loan from First National Bank of Ames. Monthly payments will continue, using the rental proceeds until we can pay off the ~\$52,500 loan. For the immediate future, the land will continue as a contracted parking area. Triplet Companies of Ames are managing the parking lot.

## Now for Opportunity #2

In July, notice to vacate was received from the tenant that occupies the north half of the first floor in our building at 416 Douglas. This has provided an opportunity and a dilemma. Should we re-rent the space to provide needed cash-flow? Or should we seek additional revenues to offset lost rent and occupy the space ourselves? The Board ponders this question. Stay tuned!

## Bert & Mary Adams Home Sold

At a July 27 auction, a winning bid of \$145,000 was received on the property at 1013 Adams Street, in Ames. This historic home on 5 acres of land near Ada Hayden Park was bequeathed to the City of Ames by Mary Adams. She had hoped it could be used as a park structure, but this proved unfeasible.



A 1.8 acre parcel with the house on it was separated from the larger property and sold. By an agreement with the City, the proceeds from the sale (after their expenses) will come to the Society. This will generate \$45,000 to \$60,000 for the Facilities (Building) Fund.

This gift from Mary Adams via the City of Ames will allow us to make the final payment on our building at 416 Douglas! Watch for a celebration announcement!

## Update on Challenge Grant

In the last newsletter, we were excited to announce receiving an Endowment Challenge Grant from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

This means that for every \$3 you contribute, an additional \$1 is earned from the Challenge Grant (up to \$10,000)!

**To receive this Challenge Grant, we must raise an additional \$30,000 for our Endowment by February 2013.**

All contributions made to the Endowment since the Grant was received have been allocated to meet the Challenge.

The principle of endowment funds is that your gift goes on giving forever. Donations are invested and the interest (4% to 5%) is distributed annually for operating expenses. It is essential for the long-term viability of the Society to build an substantial endowment .

Donations can be made to AHS with:

- Tangible assets such as cash, corn in a bin or real estate property
- Transfers of appreciated stock
- IRA rollovers of up to \$100,000 if you are over 70 ½ \*\* (see below)
- Memorial gifts in honor of a loved one or community member
- Bequests from your estate
- Gifts resulting from being a beneficiary of a retirement account or insurance policy

**Please consider a gift to the Ames Historical Society's Cultural Trust Endowment Challenge Fund!**

Donations to the Challenge may be made using the form on the last page. They may be sent directly to the Story County Community Foundation. For more information please contact Suzy Shierholz, (515-232-9200).

*\*\* Charitable Gifts from your IRA*

*The December 2010 Federal Tax Act, scheduled to expire Dec. 31, 2010, has been extended for the entire year of 2011. This act enables charitable donors to make tax-free gifts from their IRA'S if the donors are over 70 ½. Donors may exclude from their taxable income any IRA funds up to \$100,000 that have been transferred directly from their IRA to a qualified charity. There may be possible tax benefits to you even if you do not itemize your tax deductions. The transfer may count against your unsatisfied required minimum distribution from your IRA. Please consult your financial advisor or attorney.*

# Headquarters Happenings @ 416 Douglas

## Intern & Questers Team Up



Casie Brockert, a Media-polis, IA intern from University of Northern Iowa, received college credit for working more than 120 hours with the Society this summer. Casie photographed display panels so we could place them on our website, observed an event at

Hoggatt School and spent time in the office learning local history. By far her biggest task was serving as Facilitator for two Ames Questers groups on a grant project. Captain Greeley and Neta Snook Chapters received a state Questers grant for \$1,300 to which they added \$700. This money purchased 2900 hard-copy prints of selected Ames Tribune Archive images. Casie selected, cropped and digitally enhanced scans from the Tribune



Archive and worked with Quester volunteers to label and house the finished prints. The grant required the groups to put in volunteer time, so the two groups worked with Casie to mark each image with its identifying number. They will continue even though Casie's internship is finished. She has graduated and hopes to work in a museum setting.

## First Graders Visit AHS



Twenty-two first graders from the Ames Community Pre-School visited in mid-July for a hands-on history experience.

Administrator Alan Spohnheimer has developed a game he calls "New & Old" for younger visitors. The group had a

great time guessing which "old" thing corresponds to something "new" we are familiar with today. Alan also hosts Cub Scout groups with a similar sort of program. It made for a very lively afternoon at Headquarters!

## 4-Hers Pitch in

In late June, a volunteer crew of youth attending the State 4-H Conference in Ames performed several hours



of community service. They worked from 8:30 to 11am on AHS' ongoing project of inventorying and filing house plans into our collection.

From left, they are chaperone Ann Gibney-Elkader, Krista Klocke-Ames, Rachel Adams-Oskaloosa, Alana Redenius-Holstein, and Christan Bertelson-Winterset.

## RR Memorabilia Sought

A special exhibition is planned in 2012 about the impact of the railroad on the development of Ames. Titled, "Rail Reality: How the Trains Made Ames," the show will take place in three galleries at the Octagon Center for the Arts. The exhibits will include a historical perspective in specific key time periods, a one-man show by train artist Stewart Buck and models of the "Dinkey" and the original Ames train yards. If our members have railroad-related artifacts they would be willing to loan this exhibit, please e-mail us at [mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org) or call 515-232-2148.

## Museum Shop

Many unique items!



Publications from the C&NW Historical Society.

Gary Sutton's new book – Oskaloosa Moon

Rare, out-of-print books on individuals and events in local history.

Old timey toys and games for children.

Postcards of vintage Ames images - just 25¢ each

## Whatoff Trailer Toter

One of the more extensive pages on our website features the Whatoff Motor Company, an Ames business that started in 1928 as a filling station with two service stalls. It grew to be a prosperous Studebaker dealership and manufacturer of a vehicle of its own invention, the Whatoff Trailer Toter.

The "Toter" was used for pulling house trailers of various sizes and was built originally on a Studebaker truck frame. The Whatoffs created a telescoping mechanism that shortened the vehicle when hauling a trailer and lengthened it - for stability - when it was empty. Iowa's stringent "45 foot rule" meant operators couldn't cross the state on the Lincoln Highway but had to detour on an inefficient route through Missouri or Minnesota. Whatoff's invention shortened the truck frame enough to be legal across Iowa.

Society Administrator, Alan Spohnheimer said, "It was once our desire to find a Whatoff Trailer Toter for a museum piece, but we were discouraged when folks told us that perhaps none had survived."

A regional car show of Studebaker collectors visited Ames the weekend of August 20-21. Gary Hall of Omaha (below) contacted the Society to say he was coming to Ames with his restored Whatoff Trailer Toter! When Gary purchased his old Studebaker truck, he found our website story telling the Whatoff story. During his visit, many photos of his restored Toter were taken to add to our story of Whatoff's.



Gary had printed off many pages from our website to prove to people what he had. Here it is shown both short and long.



- To find the Whatoff story, at the homepage click on "About Ames" in the left menu, then scroll to "Businesses, Industries, Professions", and scroll to Whatoff Motor Company, click to open.

## You'll Enjoy "Our Stories"

The Society has received many wonderful reminiscences from current and former residents about Ames in earlier times. Many are posted on our website so that others can smile at the things people remember.

- From the homepage's left menu, click on "Your Stories" and browse the selections! Here are a few of what you'll find:

**Mary Metzger**, recalled her days as a young employee



at Carr's Pool in the 1950s. She worked in the basket room where pool patrons' clothing was stored while they all were enjoying a cool

splash in the pool. She recalls a frightening night when a sudden storm came up, darkening the sky and lowering the temperature to such an extent that patrons were shivering. What happened next? Read to find out!

**Betty Gulliver Johnson** shared her memories of helping the war effort as a child during World War II. She recalled collecting milkweed pods for life jackets, growing vegetables in their Victory Garden and putting up the produce in glass jars and "new-fangled" tin cans and buying stamps at school every week for War Bonds. To read her list of popular songs of the day - and maybe hum along - be sure to find her story!

**Paul Nichols** remembers many aspects of life in Ames in the 1920s and 30s - Carr's Pool, movies at the Twin Star Theater and pet white mice from Iowa State's College of Home Economics. How did he convince his mother it was hot enough to take him to the pool? You'll laugh when you find out! Balsa wood plane construction and pet crows that followed his friend to school will make you think he had an interesting childhood. And just why did he love his bike and hate alarm clocks? You'll have to read to find out!

Have a story you'd like to share? We'd love to have it! Send it to us by mail or e-mail at the addresses listed on page one of this newsletter.

**OR – contact us to have your story videotaped!**

## More Society News

### Upcoming Events: You're Invited!

#### Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 5pm:

Billy Sunday re-enactment by Homer Rodehaver; Ames-born baseball player and evangelist in the 1900s; at Bandshell Park, sponsored by Campus Baptist Church



#### Friday, September 9, 4pm:

“From Backyard Trapeze to the Greatest Show on Earth – the Leiningers of Ames as told by Zelletia.”

Hear tales by this former Ames resident & circus performer; at Ames Public Library

#### Saturday, September 10, 10am:

Historical Main Street Tour Part 3, departing from Tom Evans Park, Main Street & Burnett

#### Wed. September 28, 2:45pm:

“Remembering the Civil War: Schoolyard Games of the 1860s;” at Ames Public Library, co-sponsored with their after-school program.

### “Swing & Sway” Tells Story of Iowa’s Electric Railways

The State Historical Museum in Des Moines opened “Swing & Sway,” a new exhibit that explores the history of electric railways in Iowa, from horse cars to interurban trolleys.



The Society was pleased to provide images for this display of the Ames & College Railroad and the Ft. Dodge, Des Moines & Southern interurban.

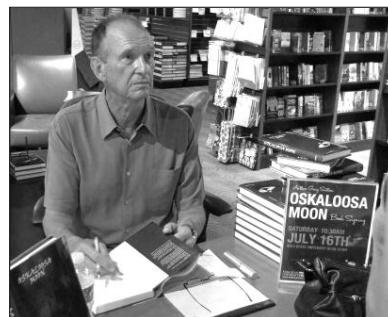
Prior to the rise of the automobile, Americans used the railroad as a main source of travel. Steam trains used for hauling goods across the country were complemented by urban electric street railways and by interurban lines. Built by local people with local funds, these railways became “personalities” within the local culture by connecting city neighborhoods to rural communities.

The exhibit will extend through May 2012. The Historical Museum is at 600 E. Locust, Des Moines.

### Former Ames Writer Visits

Gary Sutton, Ames High Class of 1960, returned to Ames this summer to promote his new book, *Oskaloosa Moon*. Although the book does not take place in Ames, it has references that Ames readers may recognize.

A review described the book this way: “*Oskaloosa Moon*



recaptures beauty, pain and adolescent struggles in a mid-American farm village. Fender skirts, corn fields, a shocking new music called Rock and Roll, white bread and Velveeta, and older

kids 'making out' punctuate the coming of age for the young boy they call "Moon".

Sutton signed books on campus at the University Book Store. He has donated a number of copies to the Society’s Museum Shop to support our activities.

The story is “in the spirit of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*” and movies like *Forrest Gump* that reveal the adventures of an outcast boy who was unwilling to be invisible.”

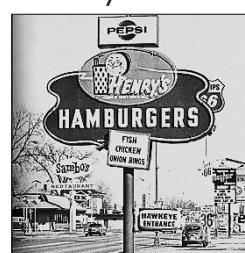
### We Get Mail!

#### Sharon Granzow, LIFT Director, to Hoggatt School Curator, Carol Phillips:

“Thank you for such a wonderful program today at Hoggatt School! You know you made them happy, when they all started singing, “School Days!” It is so important for surviving spouses to get out of their houses (especially when it is rainy and overcast like it has been), eat and socialize with others and then learn something. I have called on the Ames Historical Society several times this year. In each and every case, our members have shown delight in hearing the information. Ames is such a great community because of volunteers like you.”

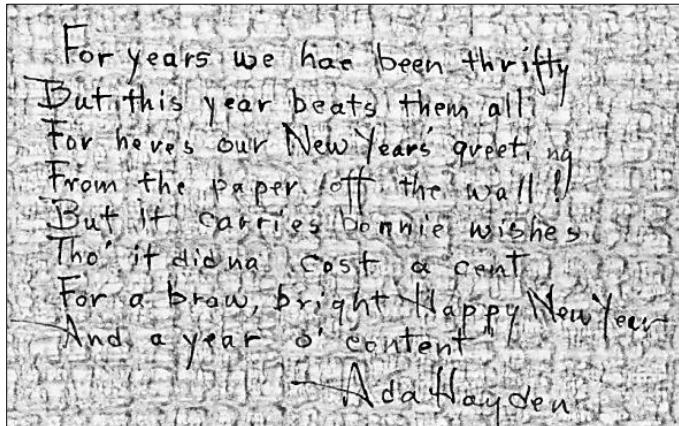
#### From Barb Holm-Ellis, Class of 1976 Reunion Committee, to Kathy Svec, presenter:

“Thank you so much [for the slide show program at our class reunion]! People were asking about gas prices and bars that were around back then (1970s). I heard so many compliments about the show - it was a good time - I am glad it was such a success!”



## Collections Highlight

Items belonging to Ada Hayden, prominent Ames/Iowa State botanist, made collections "news" earlier this year. A set of donated slides and photos were identified by Deb Lewis, ISU's Ada Hayden Herbarium curator. She confirmed they were of Iowa prairie flora hand tinted by Hayden. The long-missing slides had been unknowingly acquired by Howard Shanks in a cabinet from ISU Surplus. They were returned to ISU. Several items were retained for our own collections.



Then, a local resident donated a handmade Christmas card (above) with an original poem by Ada printed on recycled wallpaper. It says, "For years we hae been thrifty, But this year beats them all. For here's our New Year greeting From paper on the wall! But it carries bonnie wishes Tho' it didna cost a cent. For a brow, bright Happy New Year And a year o' content."

## Is it time to renew your membership?

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. Check this newsletter's label for information about your membership. Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you

Introductory - 1st year	\$10	Sustaining	\$100
Individual	\$25	Sustaining Plus	\$101-500
Family	\$40	Benefactor	\$500
Friend	\$50	Patron	\$1,000

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**

## Yes! I'd like to contribute to the Endowment Challenge!

For every \$3 you contribute, an additional \$1 is earned from the Challenge Grant (up to \$10,000).

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**  
**Story County Community Foundation, PO Box 1666,**  
**Ames, IA 50010**

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